

THE APPLICATION OF THINK-TALK-WRITE STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

Muhyiddin Aziz¹ and Eda Maaliah²

^{1,2} English Department of Madiun State Polytechnic
Madiun State Polytechnic

Jl. Jl. Serayu No. 84 Madiun 63133 Telp. (0351) 452970 Fax (0351) 492960

Email: muhyiddinaziz@pnm.ac.id

Abstract: *The aims of the research were: (1) To know that Think-Talk-Write Strategy can improve the students' writing skill and (2) To describe the process of Think-Talk-Write-Strategy in improving students' writing skill. This research was conducted at Madiun State Polytechnic at the Second Semester of English Department in the Academic Year of 2016/2017. There were 30 students which consisted of 5 males and 25 females. The qualitative and quantitative data were used in this research. The quantitative data were taken from the scores of the pre-test and post-test of all cycles. The qualitative data were used to compare the result before and after the research. They were taken through the observation, interview, and questionnaire. Based on the discussion and conclusion, think-talk-write strategy is recommended to improve the writing skill. It is suitable for the Second Semester of English Department students at Madiun State Polytechnic.*

Keyword: *classroom action research, writing skill, think-talk-write strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Writing takes a big role in the language learning process especially for the English foreign language learners. It is very important to give their students opportunity, guidance, direction and encouragement. So that they can learn effectively in the class and create a new things of the writing during their practical session including the students' imagination in devising

situation which causes the use of language in the expression of the students' own meaning.

Writing can be classified into a skill that should be trained continuously through some steps and processes in order to get the maximum goal of mastering writing. The steps should be based on strategy which is chosen to express the students' ideas

systematically and create the interesting atmosphere of the class for the students.

The students of English department, especially the second semester suppose that writing is one of the most difficult subjects of their lectures. They need extra energy to finish the exercises and practices. They get difficulty to start their writing and enlarge the imagination to finish their writing. They usually get stuck on building supporting sentences, sub-supporting sentences, and examples or tables to support their topic sentence. As a result, they often write the short paragraph or text. They seem only to fulfill the requirement given when they do their tasks.

The problems of writing lecture do not only come from one factor that is the students but also come from many factors such as strategy, lecturer and class atmosphere. The students usually feel bored during writing lecture as the strategy chosen create the atmosphere which do not support the writing lecture. Thus, there should be the synergy among strategy, material, strategy and the skill of the

lecturer to create the suitable atmosphere to teach writing.

To address the aforementioned issue encountering the students, there should be a solution. One of them is providing a teaching strategy called Think-Talk-Write. Think-Talk-Write is a strategy to build precisely to think and reflect and to organize ideas and to test the idea before students asked to write (Huda, 2013: 218). This strategy facilitates the exercise of language both oral and written fluently. The students are given some steps before they express their ideas and imagination in a paragraph or in a text. They can think the case in a few minutes. Then, they talk or discuss it with their friend or partner. Finally they express it in their writing.

The objectives of this research are: (1) to know whether the Think Talk Write Strategy can improve the students' writing skill at the Second Semester of English Department of Madiun State Polytechnic in the Academic Year of 2016/2017 and (2) to describe improvement of students' writing skill using Think Talk Write Strategy at the Second Semester of English Department of Madiun State

Polytechnic in the Academic Year of 2016/2017.

Based on the background of this research, the researcher proposes a research entitled “The Implementation of Think-Talk-Write Strategy to Improve the Students’ Writing Skill (A Classroom Action Research at the Second Semester of English Department of Madiun State Polytechnic in the Academic Year of 2016/2017)”

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. The Nature of Writing

Hornby states that language is human and a non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings, and desires by means of a system of sounds and sound symbols (1987: 473). By using language human communicate with their partners, friends and people from different countries and background of languages and cultures all over the world.

Raimes in Nunan states that writing was a subservient skill whose function was to support the development of oral language (1999: 271). Nunan adds that written

language does, in fact, serve a similar range board functions as does spoken language (1999: 275). It means that there should be a colaboration between the skills of speaking and writing to run together in order to make the result of communication well. In short, the students of foreign language should learn not only how to speak but also how to write correctly.

2. The Purpose of Writing

The writing is the proces of transferring the ideas, opinion and imagination expressing in a paragraph and a text. There should be a close-relationship between the writer and the readers in uderstanding the scope of the text or paragraph. The goal of writing is understanding between the writers and readers about the meaning of text is. Reid (2000: 8) states that there are at least three purposes of writing. They are as follows:

- a. To explain: It means that writers inform and educate for readers about what his or her writing.
- b. To entertain: It means that writers amuse reader through a story he or she write
- c. To persuade: It means that writers try to convince readers through his or her writing. writers try to

change the readers' mind, from close to open mind.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that the writer should pay more attention to his or her result of writing before publishing. It create good relationship between writer and reader in order to reach the goal of writing.

3. The Process of Writing

A good writing is a result of a complete proces of writing. when the writer obeys the rule of writing and follows the steps of the writing proces, he or she can produce a good writing. Harmer (2004: 4) states that writing process is the stages to produce something. There are at least four stages in the process of writing. they are as follows:

a. Planning

In this stage, the writer considers three aspects of planning. First aspect is purpose. The writer gives attention of information that he or she selects. Second, the writer has to know for whom he or she writes. The writing influences for thinking of audience. Third, the writer pays attention on the content structure while writing. He or she has to design the organization well including facts, ideas, or opinions.

b. Drafting

In this stage, the writer should have final writing before it is going to be edited. Correcting is done in the next stages after drafting.

c. Editing

In this stage, the writer reflects and revises the final writing after it was edited. This stage is helped by editor (reader) who gives opinions and suggestions of final writing.

d. Final draft

Final draft is the last process of writing. It is the result of writing process through three previous stages.

While Meyer (2005: 10) states that writing steps can be classified into six steps. They are as follows:

a. Explore ideas

In this step, the writer has to consider the points. There are subject, purpose, and audience.

b. Pre-write

The writer makes simple sentence or note words which are going to write. The writer uses some methods here. They are brainstorming, clustering, or freewriting.

c. Organize

The writer selects the points of pre-write. Then the writer makes the outline.

d. Write a first draft

The writer writes sentences into paragraphs. The writer puts ideas in first sentences as usual. The next sentences are the supporting sentences.

e. Revise the draft

After the writer makes first draft, the writer reads the writing aloud. The writer corrects the error grammatical, punctuation, or vocabulary.

f. Produce the final copy

The writer checks the corrections and edits them. After finishing, the final copy is ready to print out or publish.

Based on the theories above, it can be concluded that the writer should pass the steps, such as planning (explore ideas, pre-write, organize), drafting, editing, finaling draft and producing the final copy, in order to get the good quality of the writing. The writer ought to obey them and follow the flow sistematically.

4. The Criteria of Good Writing

Having good quality in writing is the aim of each writer. He / she tries hard to make the writing judged as a good writing. Reid (1993: 27) states that there are at least five criteria of good writing especially in academic field. They are as follows:

a. Vocabulary

b. Content

c. Organization

d. Style (syntactic structure and vocabulary)

e. Language use (mechanics, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar)

While Harmer (2004: 177) explains more detail about the five criteria of good writing such as:

a. Organization

This characteristic is about the reasonable topic with the sentences. It contains ideas, and it is supported by supporting sentences. Main sentences and supporting sentences should be organized well to make readers easy understand the text.

b. Content

The sentences are easy for readers. Readers can understand the meaning of writing.

c. Grammar

Grammar is to connect words into good sentences. Writer uses the appropriate tenses to appear meaning clearly.

d. Punctuation

Punctuation is symbol to sign sentences. Placing of punctuation is important for us to read text.

e. Style

Style of writing is the selection of vocabulary before combining sentences should be organized well to make readers easy understanding text into paragraphs. Vocabulary is foundation that should be used students while writing process. To have good writing, students have to have enough vocabulary to support their writing.

5. The Nature of Think-Talk-Write Strategy

Huinker and Laughlin state that Think-Talk-Write Strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write. The flow of communication progress from the students engaging in thought or reflective dialogue with themselves, to talking and sharing ideas with one another, to writing (1996:82).

Gazden in Huinker and Laughlin adds that Think-Talk-Write Strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write. when assigned a writing task, students are often expected to begin writing

immediately. The talk phase of the think-talk-write strategy allows for exploratory talk-“the process of learning without the answers fully intact”. The flow of communication progresses from students engaging in 15 thought or reflective dialogue with themselves, to talking, and sharing ideas with one another, to writing (2015: 82).

In conclusion, Think-Talk-Write Strategy is able to help the students use and practice the target language being learned in a systematic way. Think-Talk-Write Strategy also provides three main characters to transfer the students' ideas into paragraph and text. The students firstly think to find the idea related to the topic given. Then, they share with their friends or in their group and discuss to make their ideas organized well. Finally they express them in a paragraph and text based on the theory of writing.

6. The Activities of Think-Talk-Write Strategy

Huinker and Laughlin state that there are three steps of the process of using Think-Talk-Write Strategy (1996: 83). They are as follows:

a. Think

In this step, the students are engaged in thought a reflective dialogue with themselves. The students write down the ideas and anything they are thinking about something in their own language on a piece of paper.

b. Talk

In this step, the students are divided into groups of four or five persons. The students are allowed to discuss about what they have done in the first step. The students reflect, arrange, and share ideas in group discussion form.

c. Write

In this step, the students write the result of the discussion in the previous step.

7. The Advantages of Think-Talk-Write Strategy

Lutfiyah (2011: 31) states that there are four advantages of Think-Talk-Write Strategy. They are as follows:

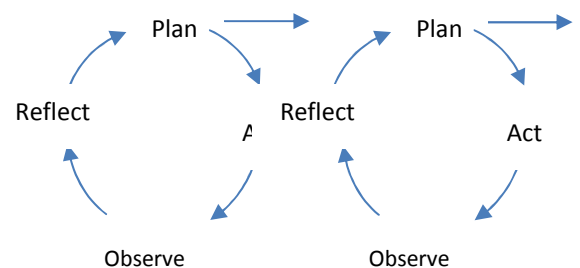
- a. The students participate actively in exploring a problem.
- b. This method develops thinking, talking, and writing process which allow stimulus for students to study hard and find information from various sources.
- c. The heterogenous group increases the students' social relationship.

- d. The students can construct their own knowledge from the result of discussion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research applied Classroom Action Research (CAR). Harmer (2003: 414) states that Action Research is the name given to a series of procedures teacher can engage in, perhaps because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or alternatively, because they wish to evaluate the success and/or appropriation of certain activities and procedures.

Action research is described as a spiral steps and there are four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Lewis in McNiff, 1998: 22). In conducting this research, the design procedure was adapted to other kind to fit the overall condition of this research. Basically the design consisted of the four components as the one Lewin has.



A representation of Lewin's Action Research Cycle (Mills, 2000: 17) is as follows:

1. Planning

The students' problem in writing English was classified based on the interview and observation in the pre cycle of the second semester's students. There were three basic problems found such as the difficulty to use English patterns, lack of vocabulary and composed a good paragraph or text based on the theory of unity and coherence of writing. The researcher decided to use Think-Talk-Write Strategy to solve the problems above by implementing the activities as follows: 1) designing learning activities using Think-Talk-Write Strategy; 2) setting the objectives that were achieved in observation; and 3) designing the tests that were used to know the success of the action.

2. Acting and Observing

The observation was done along with the implementation or the action. The researcher implemented Think-Talk-Write Strategy through the steps and activities. They were designed and formed based on the students' problems.

The activities or action of Think-Talk-Write Strategy were done in groups and individual session. The researcher observed the on going process of implementing Think-Talk-Write Strategy. The interview was also done to know the students' opinion during learning English through Think-Talk-Write Strategy.

3. Reflecting

In this time, the researcher reflected and reviewed everything that had done during the action of the activity. It was analyzed to find the strengths and weaknesses and evaluate the success and failure of the implementation of the Think-Talk-Write Strategy to solve the students' problems. The weaknesses and failure were solved for the next cycle.

There were two kinds of data which were used in this research, the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were in the form of students' scores. The data were students' scores from the beginning of the research to the end of the research. They were taken from the test. The qualitative data were collecting by the following techniques: observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Results

a. Cycle I

The first cycle was used to describe the process of teaching and learning by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy in order to improve the students' skill on writing. It was done in four steps such as; 1) planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

1) Planning

In this step, the researcher planned the lesson plans in order to achieve the goal. The lesson plans were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, a Recount Text on visiting a tourism place by using simple past tense; 3) using the students' experiences; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing written assessment.

2) Acting

The action was done for four meetings. The first meeting, the researcher discussed about the pattern and the usage of simple past on full verb and linking verb version. The second meeting, the researcher explained the vocabularies and the different functions among verbs, adjective, noun and adverb. The third

meeting the researcher explained and gave examples the use of the theories in the first and second meeting in order to compose sentences as a paragraph or text. In the fourth meeting, the researcher invited all the students to present the result of their writing in front of the class and discuss to find solution of difficulty and give suggestion. The researcher also interviewed the students after presenting their recount text by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy; and held written test to know the improvement of the writing indicators.

3) Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The researcher focused the observation to the students who had some difficulties in writing. the researcher also paid attention to the students who were passive during the process of teaching and learning by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy.

4) Reflecting

In the cycle I, the students said that the activities of Think-Talk-Write Strategy, Recount text based on the experience, gave the chance for the students to learn English more

especially on writing. They were active to ask each other and cooperated well with their friends as it was done in group of 4 or five students. They helped each other to solve the difficulty and problems Think-Talk-Write Strategy in the cycle I also gave them a new experience in learning English for writing subject as they could learn and practice their skill in a different situation. Think-Talk-Write Strategy provided an opportunity to think in a group, communicate in a group and write the result individually.

b. Cycle II

The researcher found some students make mistakes on pattern during arranging words into sentences especially on verbs such as determining the form of the verb 2, using the wrong linking verbs was, were, changing the Verb 2 into verb 1 in negative and interrogative sentences, and negative pattern on did. They also got mistakes on organizing the sentences into paragraph and text. The researcher continued the research to the third cycle which consisted of: 1) revised planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

1) Revised planning

The researcher made the lesson plans to solve the problems. They were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, Description by using simple present tense; 3) using some pictures consisting different places, objects or activities; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing written assessment.

2) Acting

The action was done for four meetings which were based on the revised planning. The first meeting, the researcher discussed about the way in choosing the suitable words based on the function and category in their structure. The second meeting, the researcher explained the way to arrange the words with the different category and function into sentences and paragraph. The third meeting the researcher explained the way in arranging sentences to compose paragraph into a text. In the fourth meeting, the researcher gave opportunities to all the students to present the result of their writing in front of the class. The researcher also interviewed the students after presenting their descriptive text by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy; and

held the written test to know the improvement of the writing indicators.

3) Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The researcher focused the observation to the students who had some difficulties in writing. the researcher observed the students who had high and low scores. The researcher also paid attention to the students who were passive during the process of teaching and learning by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy.

4) Reflecting

The students said that the activities of Think-Talk-Write Strategy in composing recount and descriptive text in the cycle II impressed them and made them interested in learning English especially on writing. They cooperated well with their friends and struggled by himself or herself as it was done in groups and individual. They helped each other to dig the idea and imagination on the step of THINK. They communicate each other to complete their idea and imagination and solve the difficulties on the step of TALK. They express their idea and

imagination individually based on the topic and used the suggestion and solution on the previous step to complete and make their writing well on the step of WRITE. Think-Talk-Write Strategy activities in the cycle II also gave them a new experience in learning English as they could learn and practice their skill in the different situation of the class.

c. Cycle III

Based on the evaluation of the second cycle, the researcher found some students make mistakes on structures during arranging words into sentences especially on verbs such as using the wrong linking verb is, am, are, adding -s or -es and negative structures on does or do. They also got mistakes on organizing the sentences into paragraph and text. The researcher continued the research to the third cycle which consisted of: 1) revised planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

1) Revised planning

Some students faced some difficulties in using structures during arranging words into sentences especially on verbs such as using the wrong linking verb is, am, are, adding -s or -es and negative structures on

does or do. They also got mistakes on organizing the sentences into paragraph and text. The researcher made the lesson plans to solve the problems. They were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, Hortatory Exposition on Air Pollution; 3) using some pictures consisting different condition and the effect of air pollution in the different places in the world; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing written assessment.

2) Acting

The action was done for four meetings which were based on the revised planning. The first meeting, the researcher reminded the structure of simple present in full verb and linking verb form. The second meeting, the researcher explained the use of the structures in sentences and gave many examples. The third meeting the researcher explained the writing organization in composing paragraph and text. In the fourth meeting, the researcher gave opportunities to all the students to present the result of their writing in front of the class. The researcher also interviewed the students after presenting their Hortatory Exposition

text on Air Pollution by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy; and held the written test to know the improvement of the writing indicators.

3) Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The researcher focused the observation to the students who had some difficulties in writing. the researcher observed the students who had high and low scores. The researcher also paid attention to the students who were passive during the process of teaching and learning by using Think-Talk-Write Strategy.

4) Reflecting

The students said that the activities of Think-Talk-Write Strategy, Hortatory Exposition on Air Pollution, in the cycle III impressed them and made them interested in learning English especially on writing. They cooperated well with their friends and struggled by himself or herself as it was done in groups and individual. They helped each other to dig the idea and opinion on the step of THINK. They communicate each other to complete their idea and opinion and solve the difficulties on

the step of TALK. They express their idea and opinion individually based on the topic and used the suggestion and solution on the previous step to complete and make their writing well on the step of WRITE. Think-Talk-Write Strategy activities in the cycle III also gave them a new experience in learning English as they could learn and practice their skill in the different situation of the class.

2. Discussions

Based on the research finding, there were some important points of the improvements that could show the target of the research. They were the improvement of: 1) organization; 2) content; 3) structure; 4) mechanics; 5) vocabulary; 6) the strengths and weakness of Think-Talk-Write Strategy. The classifications are as follows:

a. The Improvement of Students Writing Skill

The observation of cycle 1, 2, and 3 showed the indicators of speaking improvement during teaching and learning process. The proofs of the improvement were on: 1) organization. Most of the students could manage their sentences based on the theory of writing such as stating

the topic, completing the supporting sentences, and giving the concluding sentence; 2) content. Most students could create the content of the composition as the topic; 3) structure. Some students could use the correct structures on composing recount text, descriptive text, and hortatory exposition text; 4) Mechanics. Most students could use the format of writing in their compositions well; 5) vocabulary. Most of the students could choose the words which related to the topic being written.

The students writing scores improved from cycle to cycle which is shown in the following tables.

The Score of Pre-test and Post-tests

N o	Level	Pre test	Post test	Post test	Post test
1	Highest	76	80	84	88
2	Average	61	63	67	71
3	Lowest	48	52	56	56

The Students' Passing Grade

N o	Passing grade	The students' score	The sum of students			
			Pre-test	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1.	60	Above Passing grade	15	20	23	27
2.	60	Below Passing grade	15	10	7	3

b. The Benefits and the Weaknesses
of Think-Talk-Write Strategy

The application of Think-Talk-Write Strategy from cycle to cycle showed the strengths such as: 1) cooperative. It made the students cooperation increase as one of the steps of Think-Talk-Write Strategy being held in group before to the individual. They helped each other, communicated using English, and built the idea, imagination and opinion that they wanted to compose in their writing during applying Think-Talk-Write Strategy; 2) interest. The students changed their perception that writing was difficult. They thought that writing was fun and interesting; 3) Student-centered. The students experienced the situation in which they wrote based on 3 steps in which two of the steps being practiced in group or team. They could change their mindset that writing was not always started individually but in group or team in the process of digging the idea, imagination and opinion before expressing them in individual composition. They also learned English on writing lecture not only from the teacher but also from their friends.

Think-Talk-Write Strategy also had some weaknesses such as: 1) crowded and noisy. The students sometimes lost control and were very noisy when they discuss and share with their friends on the step of THINK and TALK. This situation disturbed the other students that have perception writing is a serious subject and in a quiet situation. Some students also said that they could not think and imagine in the crowded situation of the class; 2) Lack of creativity. The students usually wrote the composition in monotonous sentences. They also did not show their creativity in the composition by showing the individual style of writing because of the effect of group or team cooperation on the steps of THINK and TALK.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

Think-Talk-Write Strategy inspired both the students and the researcher in improving the ability of English especially on writing. The students could practice their skill of English in the different situation and treatment. They could express their idea or opinion freely as the researcher

only became mediator during the activities of Think-Talk-Write Strategy as it was student-centred. In fact, the students' cooperation increased. They helped each other, communicated using English, and built the idea, imagination and opinion that they wanted to compose in their writing during applying Think-Talk-Write Strategy. The students changed their perception that writing was difficult. They thought that writing was fun and interesting. The students also experienced the situation in which they wrote based on 3 steps in which two of the steps being practiced in group or team. They could change their mindset that writing was not always started individually but in group or team in the process of building the idea, imagination and opinion before expressing them in individual composition. They also learned English on writing lecture not only from the teacher but also from their friends.

Furthermore, Think-Talk-Write Strategy inspired the researcher about a good strategy in teaching writing as they could be classified as an effective strategy. This strategy had clear and easy procedure to use and practice. It

could make the students change the perception that writing was not difficult lecture and it was easy to practice. It made the students understand the material fast and practiced it in a relax situation of the class.

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that in general Think-Talk-Write Strategy could improve the writing skill of the students of the second semester of English Department students at Madiun State Polytechnic.

2. Suggestions

From the conclusion above, the researcher would like to present some suggestions as follows:

1. For the lecturer
 - a. Lecturers can use Think-Talk-Write Strategy to teach writing to influence students 'writing skill.
 - b. Lecturers have to consider that Think-Talk-Write Strategy as an effective strategy that can improve writing skill and increase the students' creativity, motivation, cooperative, and interest in English.
 - c. Lecturers have to consider that Think-Talk-Write Strategy can

present the different situation for the students in which the writing class can be done with a strategy containing speaking steps.

- d. Lecturers can use Think-Talk-Write Strategy as the alternative strategy in teaching writing or even speaking class.

2. For the students

- a. The students have to change their perception that writing is the difficult skill in learning English.
- b. The students have to be more active and confident in the teaching learning process in order to improve their writing skill.
- c. The students should make the benefits of each steps of Think-Talk-Write Strategy as the chance to master their writing skill in English.

3. For Polytechnic

- a. They can use the result of this research as the example of relax and fun situation of teaching learning process that can influence the students to study without any burden as they can cooperate with their friends in

some steps before expressing their writing in final step.

- b. They can use the result of this research as the references to provide the solution of teaching writing for the lecturers.
- c. They can use the result of the research as the solution strategy for the institution in holding learning-teaching process.

4. For the other researcher

- a. They can use this result of the research as the starting point to continue the next research by using another research design and model.
- b. They can use the result of this research as the additional references in understanding and mastering the writing skill.
- c. They can create better research after they know the weaknesses of this research.

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